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Tool Kit

For Teachers, Schools and School Authorities

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ng Languages in Alberta

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Now we're talking!

Learning Languages in Alberta

Tool Kit

For Teachers, Schools and School Authorities

Contents:

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Description of Tool Kit Materials	2
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Tool Kit Materials	

A. School Newsletter Articles
B. School Newsletter Inserts
C. PowerPoint Presentation
D. Presentation Handout
E. Fact Sheets

Note: A poster has also been included in this package for your use.

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How to Use This Tool Kit

This tool kit is for you if you are a teacher, counsellor, school administrator, school authority representative or anyone else whose job it is to help students and parents make decisions about courses and programs.

This is YOUR tool kit to promote language courses and programs to students, parents, teachers and other groups in your community. We encourage you to use the ideas, information and tools in this kit to achieve your goals for language learning.

Here's what the kit contains:

- Description of Tool Kit Materials – Descriptions of various materials that have been developed to help your school or school authority encourage greater enrollment in language courses and programs.

- Local Planning and Suggested Activities – A simple planning guide that provides suggestions for using the tool kit materials and other ideas for promoting language learning in your school(s).

- Tool Kit Materials – In addition to a poster for your use, this tool kit includes the following materials:

  A. School Newsletter Articles
  B. School Newsletter Inserts
  C. PowerPoint Presentation (the slides may also be used as transparency masters)
  D. Presentation Handout
  E. Fact Sheets

This information is also available on the Alberta Learning Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages. Educators may access an electronic file of the PowerPoint presentation by following the directions on the Web site. The Web site also has additional useful information for students, parents and educators in regard to language learning in Alberta.

For more information about learning languages in Alberta, please contact:

John Sokolowski, Team Leader
Languages Initiative
Curriculum Branch
Alberta Learning
Telephone (780) 427-2984
(310-0000 toll free inside Alberta)
Fax (780) 422-3745

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Description of Tool Kit Materials

Web Site

The Alberta Learning Web site at **www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages** is your source for a wealth of information on learning languages in Alberta. The Web site offers general information on language courses and programs available in Alberta as well as specific information for students, parents and educators.

Poster

This is an 11 x 17 poster that is targeted at both parents and students with the primary message: Get MORE out of learning. The content reflects key benefits of language learning that are identified by parents and students.

School Newsletter Articles

This is a series of six brief articles (about 300 words each) that schools can use in parent newsletters, as handouts at parent meetings, in their local newspaper or in any other way they wish. The articles address the following topics:

- Why should my child learn another language?
- What effect will learning another language have on my child's English language skills?
- I don't speak the language my child is learning. How can I help?
- At what age should my child begin to learn another language?
- Learning another language has lifelong benefits!
- Learning another language can improve career and employment opportunities!

School Newsletter Inserts

School newsletter inserts are small-space "ads" that schools can use in their newsletters to deliver short messages about learning languages. Nineteen inserts have been created in various shapes and sizes.

PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation, How to Get More Out of Learning, has been created for your use. Section C of the tool kit provides a copy of each slide. The PowerPoint presentation may be viewed by visiting the Information for Educators section of the Alberta Learning Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages. Educators may wish to use the presentation in its entirety, or portions as appropriate. To obtain an electronic file, follow the instructions provided on the Web site. (Note: The slides included in the tool kit may be useful transparency masters.)

Presentation Handout

Copies of the presentation slides, in handout format, have been included for your use.

Fact Sheets

The fact sheets form a "modular" information package that allows schools to select only those information sheets they need to meet the information wants of the package user.

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Local Planning and Suggested Activities

If you want to	Use some or all of these materials...	Try one or more of these suggested activities...
Deliver messages to students and parents about the benefits of learning another language	• PowerPoint presentation for students, parents and other groups • School newsletter articles • School newsletter inserts • Poster • Fact sheets	• Identify a local champion(s) for language learning who may then communicate with students and parents • Presentations to school councils, parent meetings • Testimonials from former local students who have completed language courses • Displays at school open houses, career days, etc. • Articles in the local news media • Phone hold messages that promote language learning
Deliver messages to students who are currently in language programs and to their parents about the benefits of completing a language course sequence	• Web site www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages • Fact sheets	• Link to www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages from school or school authority Web site • Provide information to parents, teachers, counsellors and administrators • Parent information meetings • Direct messages in the classroom to encourage program completion • Connect language students with correspondents in other countries (via letters or e-mail) • Welcome event for new senior high language students
Increase enrollment in and/or completion of specific language courses or programs	• School newsletter articles	• Local contests for students who complete their program sequence (e.g., travel opportunities) • Cultural/language events in junior high schools presented by students in senior high language classes • Presentations to junior high students by senior high school language teachers • Presentations to elementary and junior high students by language teachers and students • Language Learning Week

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Now We're Talking!

School Newsletter Articles

A.

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Learning Languages in Alberta
School Newsletter Articles

Article 1
Learning Languages in Alberta—Why should my child learn another language?

Article 2
Learning Languages in Alberta—What effect will learning another language have on my child's English language skills?

Article 3
Learning Languages in Alberta—I don't speak the language my child is learning. How can I help?

Article 4
Learning Languages in Alberta—At what age should my child begin to learn another language?

Article 5
Learning Languages in Alberta—Learning another language has lifelong benefits!

Article 6
Learning Languages in Alberta—Learning another language can improve career and employment opportunities!

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Article 1

Learning Languages in Alberta—Why should my child learn another language?

Preparing our children for a changing world is one of the main objectives of education in Alberta and a primary concern for parents.

Learning another language can help your child to:

- improve listening skills
- increase cognitive abilities, creating a more flexible thinker
- enhance communication skills in his or her first language
- develop a deeper understanding of his or her own culture
- improve overall school performance
- make learning a third or fourth language much easier.

We are now more closely connected to our global neighbours than ever before. Advances in technology are making it easier to travel and communicate with people all over the world. Increasing immigration is making our local communities more diverse and enriched. In addition, our economic well-being is linked to our ability to succeed in the international marketplace.

Knowing another language can give your child:

- a lifelong ability to communicate with more people
- an increased understanding of and respect for people of other cultures
- broader educational and career opportunities
- a competitive edge in the job market
- more opportunities to enjoy literature, art, music, theatre, sports and travel.

Knowing another language can prepare your child to be a part of the new global community.

And language learning is fun!

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Article 2

Learning Languages in Alberta—What effect will learning another language have on my child's English language skills?

Many parents worry that their children's English language skills will be affected by learning another language. The truth is that a child's English will not be harmed by learning another language and may even be improved!

In studies that looked at the effect of learning another language on first language skills, the results have been positive. Students in second language programs readily transfer the skills they learn in one language to the other. They learn a lot about the English language by looking for similarities and differences between English and the language they are learning.

All Alberta students take the same English language arts program and are expected to achieve the same standards. In early immersion programs, because of the initial focus on learning the second language, students do lag behind peers in the regular program in some English skills. However, they quickly catch up once they have had one or two years of English language arts. By Grade 5 or Grade 6, children in immersion programs do as well as or better than those in the English language program.

Many studies have found that English skills are actually enhanced by learning another language. Immersion and bilingual program students often outperform students in the regular program in some English skill areas.

Want to help improve your child's English language skills? Suggest learning another language!

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Article 3

Learning Languages in Alberta—I don't speak the language my child is learning. How can I help?

Motivation and a positive attitude toward learning are key factors in any child's success. Simply taking an interest in your child's progress and encouraging activities that enhance language learning will put you—and your child—on the right track!

- Discuss the language program or course with your child's teacher and find out what you and your child should expect from the experience.
- Encourage your child to talk to you regularly about what he or she is learning and to teach you some words and phrases in the new language. Practise together!
- Add target language resources, such as an age-appropriate bilingual dictionary, verb book and atlas, to the family bookshelf and encourage your child to use them. Your teacher will be able to suggest titles and sources.
- Encourage your child to use and experiment with English. Children readily transfer skills learned in one language to the other. By encouraging reading, writing, word games, and family discussions and debates, you will be helping to enhance your child's communication skills in both languages.

Children enrolled in language programs make the most progress when they hear the target language outside of school. You can encourage your child's interest in other languages and cultures if you:

- go on family outings to cultural events that feature music, dance and food from countries where other languages are spoken
- find posters, books, magazines, videos, television programs, board games, computer games and Internet sites in the language that interests your child
- offer your child the chance to participate in an exchange program or in educational tours that provide opportunities to interact with native speakers of the language and to experience the culture
- encourage your child to interact with a relative or friend who speaks the language, through visits, letters, telephone conversations or e-mail.

Stay positive, encourage growth and celebrate success! Your child will do the rest.

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Article 4

Learning Languages in Alberta—At what age should my child begin to learn another language?

There is no magic age to begin learning another language! Languages can be learned at any age or stage of life. Interest and motivation are the key factors.

Most language learning experts agree that it is easier to learn another language at a young age (before adolescence). The earlier children are exposed to another language, the greater their chances of learning to use the language like a native speaker. This is because:

- language learning appeals to the younger child's love of repetition and mimicry
- younger children's communication needs are less complex than those of older children or adults
- unlike older children and adults, younger children are risk takers and not afraid of making mistakes
- a younger child's vocal structures are more flexible than those of older children or adults—this makes it easier to develop an authentic accent.

As a general rule, the more time your child spends learning another language the more proficient he or she will become.

For a young child, choose a language program or course sequence that begins in the elementary grades and continues throughout the secondary years. Encourage your child to stick with it.

When helping an older child choose a second language program or course sequence, discuss the options available. Talk about how the benefits fit with his or her future goals. Encourage a long-term commitment.

Remember, learning any language is a lifelong pursuit! Just as your child's first language skills will improve over time, so too will your child's second language skills. A long-term commitment will give your child the best results!

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Article 5

Learning Languages in Alberta—Learning another language has lifelong benefits!

The benefits of learning another language are many and can touch all parts of your child's life.

When you learn another language you exercise your brain. You not only learn how to communicate in another language, you benefit from a whole new set of skills and abilities!

Depending on when your child starts to learn another language, and the length and intensity of this experience, your child can:

- become a better listener
- develop greater self-discipline
- learn to compare and contrast, solve problems and think more creatively.

Gaining these skills can lead to improved learning (and higher marks!) in other subjects, such as mathematics, science and social studies.

Learning another language in school can also open up the educational opportunities your child will have after senior high school. If your child knows another language, he or she:

- will have more universities, colleges and technical training institutions and programs to choose from—both in Canada and in other countries
- will be able to enroll in degree programs and courses that have a second language prerequisite
- will have access to a larger pool of information from which to study and learn.

Many Canadian post-secondary institutions offer options to study abroad, as well as work experience opportunities that require skills in another language or for which these skills would be an advantage. Students who know or are learning another language may participate in a variety of exchange programs, summer courses and opportunities to work abroad.

Learning another language will help prepare your child for the challenges and opportunities in our changing world!

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Article 6

Learning Languages in Alberta—Learning another language can improve career and employment opportunities!

Communication skills, mobility and flexibility are key factors for getting jobs and advancing in the rapidly changing and increasingly interdependent world of the 21st century. Skills in at least two languages can provide an edge in this global job market.

Young people who know more than one language have a wide variety of career and employment opportunities open to them. These opportunities may require the immediate use of a second language, or a second language may be needed to advance to higher level jobs. Here are just some of the opportunities:

- The service sector offers opportunities in travel and tourism, sales, customer service (including call centres) and clerical positions.
- There is a growing demand for employees who speak languages in addition to English, in areas such as the import/export sector, marketing, computer software development and technical support, public relations, investment, management and transportation.
- Communication and media opportunities include international advertising, radio and television, writing (including technical, commercial and sports writing), translation, publishing and filmmaking.
- Libraries, museums, foundations and governments require researchers and employees with abilities in more than one language.
- The education field in Alberta, across Canada and abroad increasingly requires teachers and researchers with skills in more than one language.
- Many organizations require translators, interpreters and researchers.

Not only are employers looking for language skills, many also recognize that people who know more than one language often have other desirable skills, such as problem-solving skills, self-discipline and the ability to understand cultural differences. Many employers want staff members who are adaptable and can travel in or move to other countries. They take advantage of the fact that it doesn't cost more to hire someone with fluency in more than one language, but it gives them more for their money!

In Alberta alone, more than 2,000 businesses export goods and services around the world. In the year 2000, our exports represented over one third of our economic activity, or more than $59 billion. The business Albertans do with foreign markets involves some 500,000 jobs.

With skills in another language, your child will be prepared to take on the new world of work!

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Now We're Talking!

School Newsletter Inserts

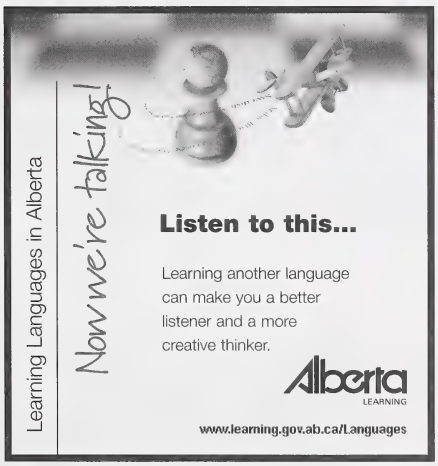
B.

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Learning Languages in Alberta
School Newsletter Inserts

LLA_1



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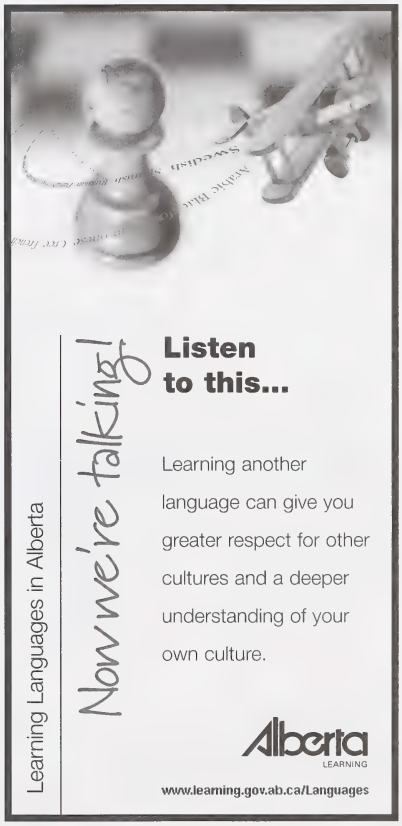

LLA_3

LLA_4

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Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

Research shows that students who are fluent in two languages score higher in a variety of literacy/numeracy tests (e.g., reading comprehension, problem solving).

Alberta LEARNING

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

LLA_5

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

Knowing another language can give you a world of opportunities in post-secondary education, employment, travel and entertainment.

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

Alberta LEARNING

LLA_6

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

There is a growing demand for employees who speak more than one language, in areas such as marketing, computer software development and technical support, public relations, investment, management, transportation and the import/export sector.

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

Alberta LEARNING

LLA_7

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

Children in language programs readily transfer the skills they learn in one language to another.

Alberta LEARNING

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

LLA_8

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Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

Planning to be a teacher? There is a constant need for teachers with second language skills in Alberta's schools—and the need will continue to grow as more students find out about the benefits of learning other languages!

Alberta LEARNING

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

LLA_9

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Listen to this...

You can encourage your child's interest in another language by finding posters, books, magazines, videos, television programs, board games, computer games and Web sites in the language that your child is learning.

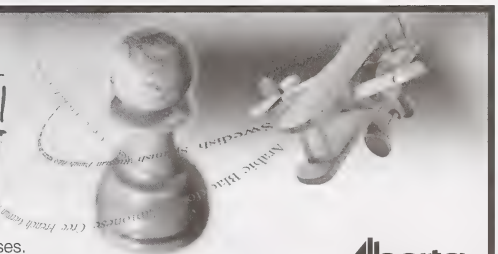
www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

Alberta LEARNING

LLA_10

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!



Listen to this...

You can help your children learn and practise the language they are studying by asking them to teach you some new words and phrases.

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages

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LLA_11

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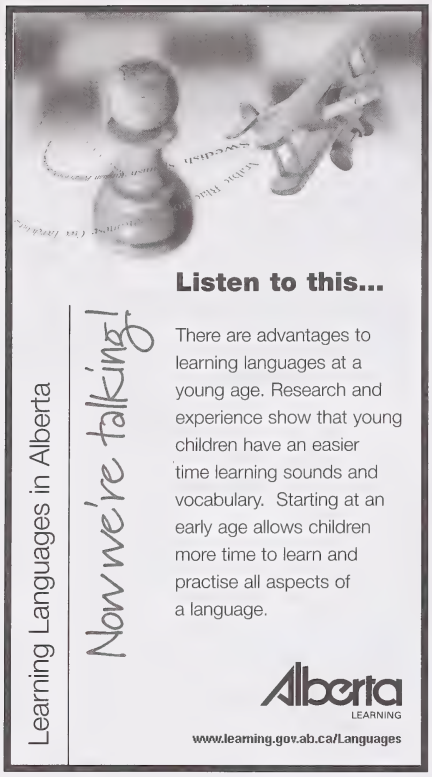

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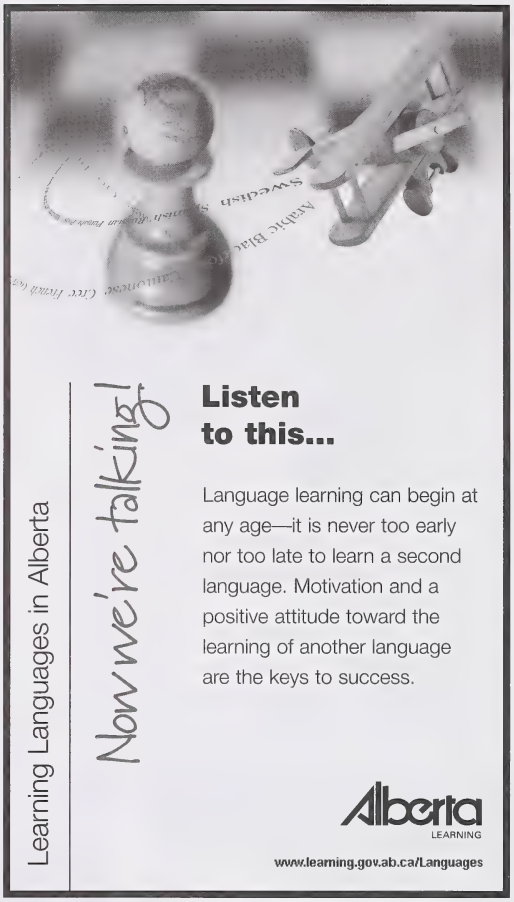

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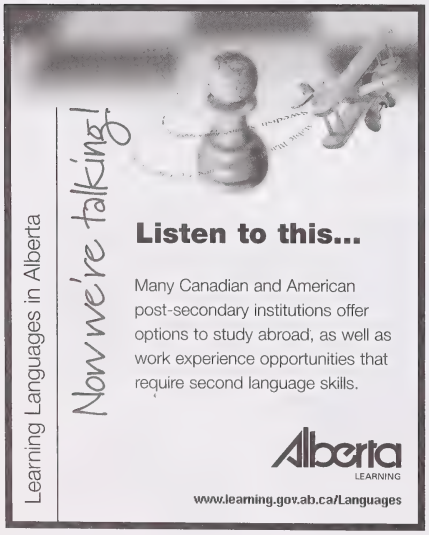

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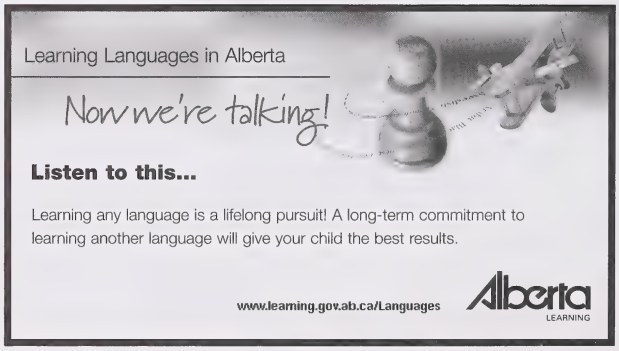

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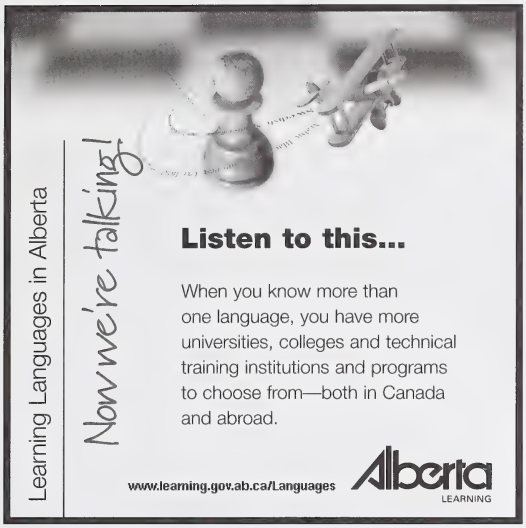

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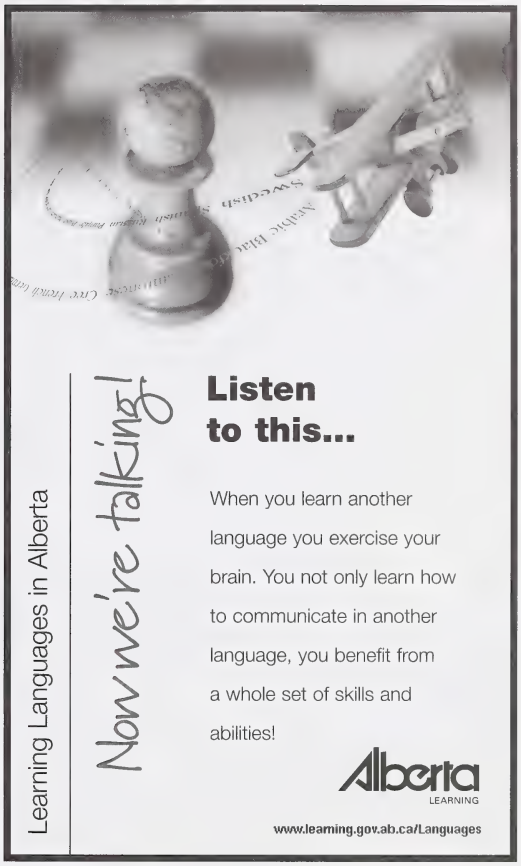

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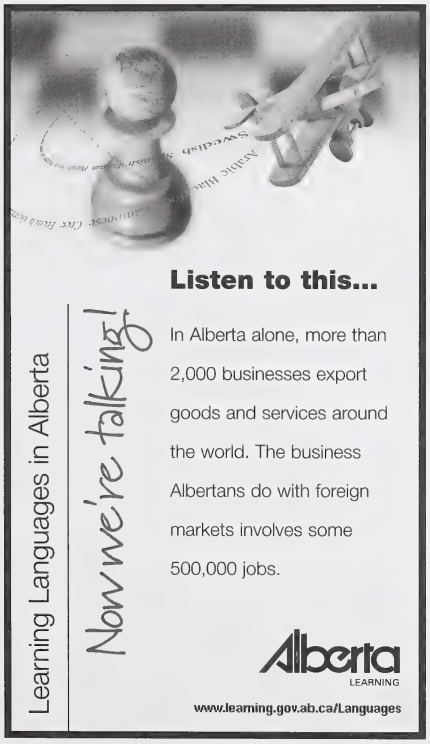

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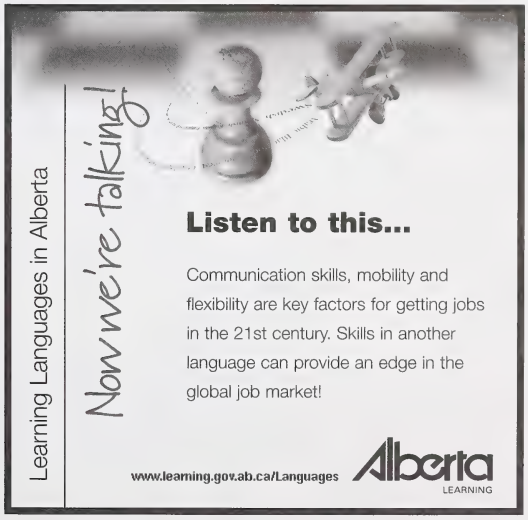

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Now We're Talking!

PowerPoint Presentation

C.

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

How to get more out of learning

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Alberta
LEARNING

Learn MORE about other people and cultures

Learning another language can:

- help you learn more about other people and other cultures
- allow you to communicate with people from different countries and cultures
- promote acceptance and valuing of other cultures.

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Get MORE educational opportunities

Learning another language will give you:

- more post-secondary institutions and programs to choose from in Canada and abroad
- a larger pool of reference materials and books from which to study and learn
- a whole range of exciting learning opportunities—from exchange programs to study or work experience programs abroad.

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Get MORE job and career opportunities

- Many employers in Canada and abroad are looking for people who can speak other languages.
- Opportunities exist in such areas as travel and tourism, sales, customer service, clerical, libraries, museums, foundations and government.
- There is an ongoing need for language teachers in Alberta's schools.
- Many national and international organizations require translators, interpreters and researchers.

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Get MORE personal enjoyment

- Language learning provides more opportunities to enjoy literature, art, music, theatre and sports in at least two languages.
- Travelling to other countries will be easier and a lot more fun if you can speak and understand the local language.
- Knowing another language widens your circle of friends by meeting people from different countries and cultures.

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Get MORE skills

Learning another language can:

- improve your listening skills
- increase your ability to solve problems and think creatively
- enhance your communication skills in English
- improve your test scores in mathematics.

Source: "Impact of Second Language Education on Intellectual Development, Student Achievement, Socialisation and Economic Potential of Student and Province," Alberta Learning, 1999.

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MORE information about learning languages

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Isn't it enough to know English?

- No. Almost three quarters of the world's population does not speak English.
- You can buy in your native language, but to sell you should use the customer's language.
- English is not the primary language for 64% of the world's Internet users.

Source: Global Reach, http://www.glreach.com/globstats/index.php3. Retrieved December 10, 2003.

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Which language(s) should Albertans learn?

Some things to consider:

- Is language an important part of your family and cultural heritage?
- Are you interested in working with the federal government or with a national company?
- Are you interested in working with an international company in a specific part of the world?
- Are you interested in travelling, studying, working or living in a particular country?

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When should I start learning another language?

- Language learning can begin at any age.
- Motivation and a positive attitude are the keys to success.
- Starting at an early age allows children more time to learn and practise all aspects of the language.
- Secondary students and adult learners pick up certain aspects of the language more quickly and efficiently.
- Learning any language is a lifelong pursuit.

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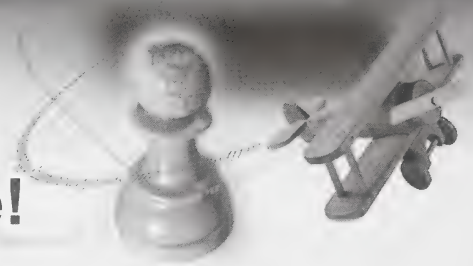
There's MORE than one way to learn a language!



- *Second language course series*. The language is studied as a subject to develop communication skills and cultural awareness.
- *Bilingual programs*.
  The language being learned is used for instruction for up to half the school day.
- *Alternative French language programs (includes French immersion)*. French is used as the language of instruction for most of each school day.

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The MORE you put in, the MORE you get out!

- In general, the more time and effort you put into learning and experiencing another language, the more skilled you will become.
- Your reason for learning another language can help you decide what type of course or program you want.
- Remember, learning any language is a lifelong pursuit!

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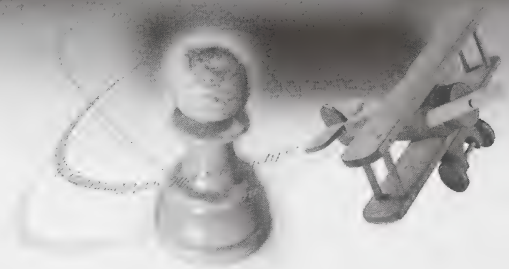
Alberta's language learning requirement



- Beginning in September 2006, all Grade 4 students in Alberta will begin studying a second language.
- This language requirement will be implemented one year at a time until 2011–2012 when all grades 4–9 students will study a second language in Alberta's schools.
- Interested Grade 10 students will have the opportunity to continue studying this language, or begin the study of another language.

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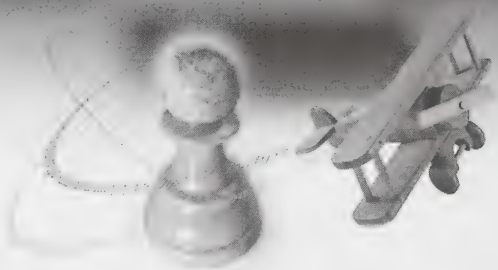
Alberta's language learning requirement (continued)



- Alberta Learning is currently developing new programs of study and support resources in seven languages: Cree, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Ukrainian.
- Development in other languages will occur as resources become available.
- Local school authorities will determine which language programs they will offer.
- They may maintain or expand their current language programs.

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Find out MORE

- Check with your school or school authority to find out which language courses and programs are offered.
- Visit the Alberta Learning Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages.

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Now We're Talking!

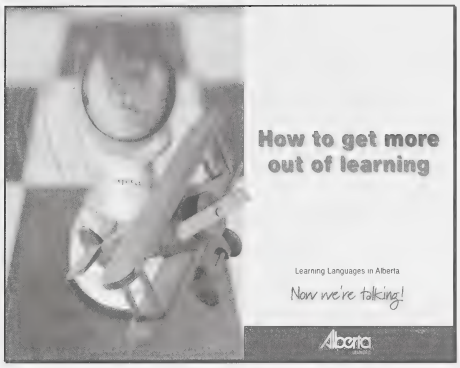
Presentation Handout

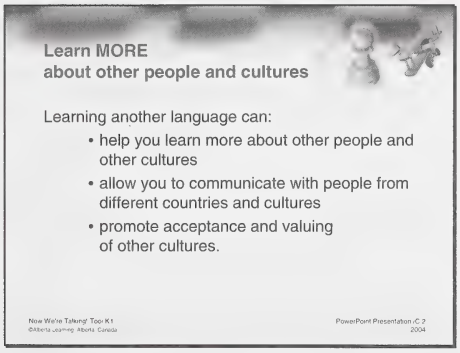
D.

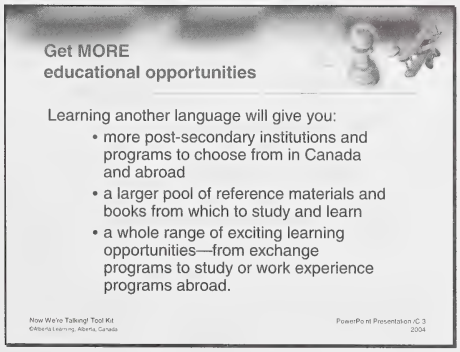
Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Learning Languages in Alberta
How to Get More Out of Learning







Get MORE job and career opportunities

- Many employers in Canada and abroad are looking for people who can speak other languages.
- Opportunities exist in such areas as travel and tourism, sales, customer service, clerical, libraries, museums, foundations and government.
- There is an ongoing need for language teachers in Alberta's schools.
- Many national and international organizations require translators, interpreters and researchers.

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Get MORE personal enjoyment

- Language learning provides more opportunities to enjoy literature, art, music, theatre and sports in at least two languages.
- Travelling to other countries will be easier and a lot more fun if you can speak and understand the local language.
- Knowing another language widens your circle of friends by meeting people from different countries and cultures.

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Get MORE skills

Learning another language can:

- improve your listening skills
- increase your ability to solve problems and think creatively
- enhance your communication skills in English
- improve your test scores in mathematics.

Source: "Impact of Second Language Education on Skills and Developments: Student Achievement, Socialization and Economic Potential of Student and Province." Alberta Learning, 1999

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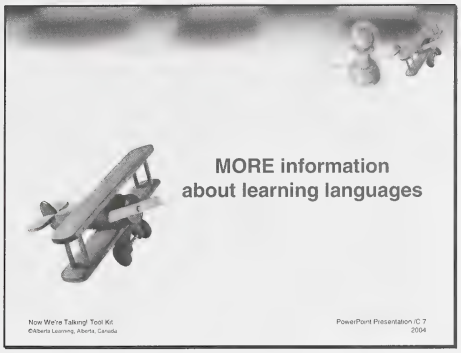
MORE information
about learning languages
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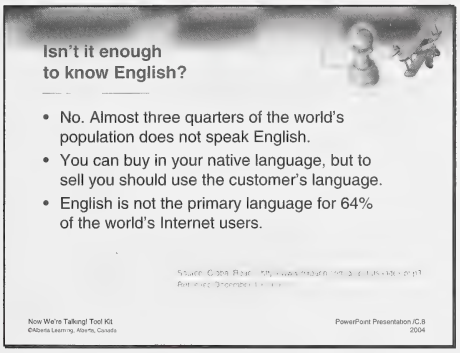
Isn't it enough
to know English?
• No. Almost three quarters of the world's population does not speak English.
• You can buy in your native language, but to sell you should use the customer's language.
• English is not the primary language for 64% of the world's Internet users.
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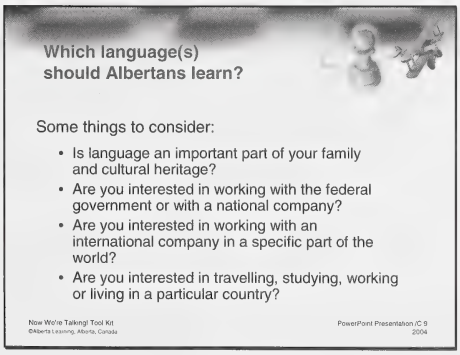
Which language(s)
should Albertans learn?
Some things to consider:
• Is language an important part of your family and cultural heritage?
• Are you interested in working with the federal government or with a national company?
• Are you interested in working with an international company in a specific part of the world?
• Are you interested in travelling, studying, working or living in a particular country?
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When should I start learning another language?

- Language learning can begin at any age.
- Motivation and a positive attitude are the keys to success.
- Starting at an early age allows children more time to learn and practise all aspects of the language.
- Secondary students and adult learners pick up certain aspects of the language more quickly and efficiently.
- Learning any language is a lifelong pursuit.

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There's MORE than one way to learn a language!

- *Second language course series.* The language is studied as a subject to develop communication skills and cultural awareness.
- *Bilingual programs.* The language being learned is used for instruction for up to half the school day.
- *Alternative French language programs (includes French immersion).* French is used as the language of instruction for most of each school day.

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The MORE you put in, the MORE you get out!

- In general, the more time and effort you put into learning and experiencing another language, the more skilled you will become.
- Your reason for learning another language can help you decide what type of course or program you want.
- Remember, learning any language is a lifelong pursuit!

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Alberta's language learning requirement

- Beginning in September 2006, all Grade 4 students in Alberta will begin studying a second language.
- This language requirement will be implemented one year at a time until 2011–2012 when all grades 4–9 students will study a second language in Alberta's schools.
- Interested Grade 10 students will have the opportunity to continue studying this language, or begin the study of another language.

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Alberta's language learning requirement (continued)

- Alberta Learning is currently developing new programs of study and support resources in seven languages: Cree, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Ukrainian.
- Development in other languages will occur as resources become available.
- Local school authorities will determine which language programs they will offer.
- They may maintain or expand their current language programs.

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Find out MORE

- Check with your school or school authority to find out which language courses and programs are offered.
- Visit the Alberta Learning Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/Languages.

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Now We're Talking!

Fact Sheets

E.

Learning Languages in Alberta

Now we're talking!

Benefits of Learning Another Language

There are many reasons to learn another language. But most people learn another language because they want more!

More educational opportunities

With skills in another language you:

- will have more universities, colleges and technical training institutions and programs to choose from—both in Canada and in other countries
- can take degree programs and courses that have a second language prerequisite—no make-up courses!
- will have a larger pool of reference materials and books from which to study and learn—no waiting for the only English book to be returned to the library!
- can take advantage of a whole range of exciting learning opportunities—from exchange programs to study or work experience programs abroad.

More job and career opportunities

- Many employers are looking for people with second language skills. They also want the skills that learning a second language helps to develop: problem-solving skills, self-discipline and the ability to understand cultural differences.
- There is a constant need for teachers with second language skills in Alberta's schools—and the need will continue to grow as more students find out about the benefits of learning a second language!
- The business Albertans do with foreign markets has created some 500,000 jobs in areas such as marketing, computer software development and technical support, public relations, investment, management and transportation.
- The service sector offers opportunities in travel and tourism, sales, customer service (including call centres) and clerical positions.
- Libraries, museums, foundations and governments require researchers and employees with second language abilities.
- There are many organizations that require translators, interpreters and researchers.

More knowledge of other cultures

- Learning another language can give you a better understanding of other people, their cultures and how they view the world.
- When you know another language you can communicate with people from other countries and other cultures.

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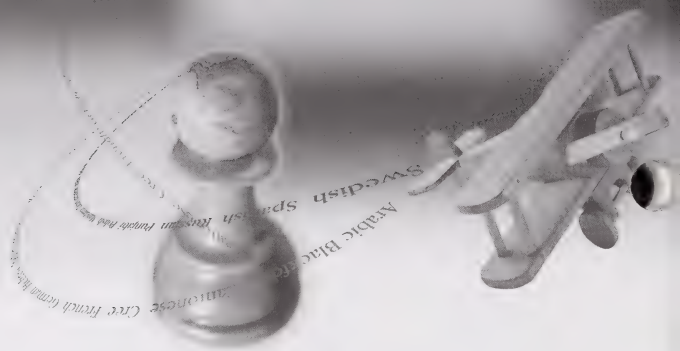

Benefits of Learning Another Language (continued)

More personal enjoyment

- When you know another language, you have more opportunities to enjoy literature, art, music, theatre and sports—in at least two languages!
- Travelling to other countries is easier—and a lot more fun!—if you can speak and understand the local language.
- Whether you're meeting people from other countries face-to-face, as pen pals or through e-mail, knowing another language widens your circle of friends.

More skills

When you learn another language you exercise your brain. You not only learn how to communicate in another language, you benefit from a whole set of skills and abilities!

Learning another language can:

- improve your listening skills
- increase your ability to solve problems and think creatively
- enhance your communication skills in English
- improve your test scores in mathematics
- make learning a third or fourth language easier.

Learn another language and you're prepared to take on the world!

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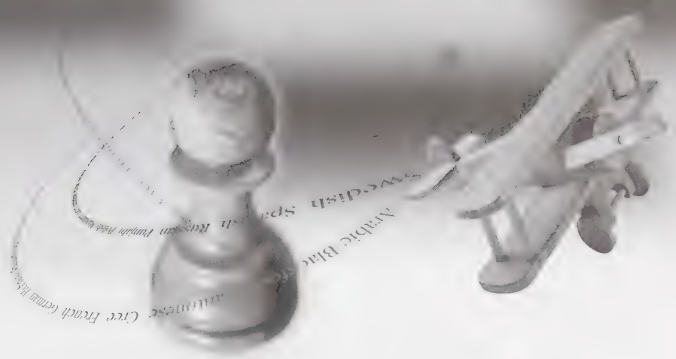
Now we're talking!



Frequently Asked Questions About Learning Other Languages

Why should Albertans learn other languages? Isn't it enough to know English?

No. In fact, almost three quarters of the world's population does not speak English. Those who are learning English recognize the benefits of knowing another language. European countries, for example, are encouraging their citizens not only to learn a second language but a third as well.

In business circles, it is common knowledge that you can buy in your native language but to sell you should use the customer's language. Other people in the world are learning English, because they want to sell to us. If we are to succeed in emerging markets, we need first-hand knowledge of our customers. For this, we need to speak their language.

In addition, English is NOT the primary language for 64% of the world's Internet users.

- Europe has 257 million Internet users who speak 20 different languages.
- 80% of Europe's Web sites support multiple languages.
- Computer trend researchers predict that English will no longer be the default language on many Web sites in the near future and that, in many cases, it won't be offered at all.

Source: Global Reach – http://www.glreach.com/globstats/index.php3
Retrieved December 10, 2003

Which language(s) should Albertans learn?

You should learn one or more languages that meet family, cultural, national and international needs.

At the family and community levels, languages preserve cultural identity, develop self-esteem and provide for communication between generations.

At the national level, English and French are the official languages of Canada and are used in the federal government and in businesses and industries that operate at the national level.

At the international level, as Alberta is increasing its trade, language skills are becoming more vital. Chinese (Mandarin), Spanish, Japanese and German are languages spoken in some of the countries with which we trade.

Some things to consider:

- Is language an important part of your family and cultural heritage?
- Are you interested in working with the federal government or with a national company?
- Are you interested in working with an international company in a specific part of the world?
- Are you interested in travelling, studying, working or living in a particular country?

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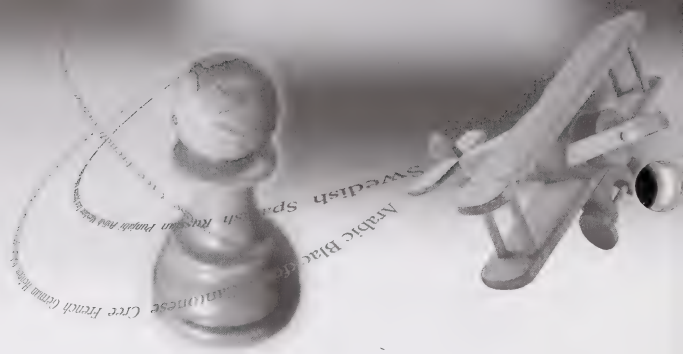

Frequently Asked Questions About Learning Other Languages (continued)

When should Albertans start learning another language?

Language learning can begin at any age—it is never too early nor too late to learn another language. Motivation and a positive attitude toward the learning of other languages are the keys to success.

Research shows:

- There are advantages to learning languages at a young age, such as more time to learn and practise new sounds, vocabulary and structures.
- Older students more readily identify syntax patterns.

Research also shows that older learners are more efficient learners and learn certain aspects of the language, such as language structure and syntax, more quickly than do younger learners. Adult learners also tend to be more motivated to learn another language.

But remember, learning any language is a lifelong pursuit! Just as first language skills improve as a person gets older, so too will second (or third!) language skills. You will get the best results by making a long-term commitment to learning other languages.

What effect will learning other languages have on English language skills?

In studies on the effect of learning another language on first language skills, the results have been positive. Language learners readily transfer the skills they learn in one language to another. They learn a lot about English by looking for similarities and differences between English and the language they are learning.

Can Albertans take language courses through distance learning?

Yes. In a distance learning course, students learn from home through the Internet (online delivery) or with the use of print, audio and visual materials and teacher support through e-mail, fax and telephone tutoring. Language courses available by distance learning include French as a second language and Ukrainian in junior and senior high, and German and Spanish in senior high.

Are there opportunities for Albertans to learn languages outside of the regular school system?

Yes. Outside the publicly funded school system, students can learn international languages in community-based international language schools. Alberta has over 90 community-based schools that offer instruction in 36 languages through evening and weekend courses. All of these schools are funded by community groups.

Languages offered by these community-based schools include: Arabic, Cantonese, Croatian, Czech, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog (the Philippines), Ukrainian and Vietnamese. Some of these schools offer provincial international language courses or locally developed second language courses for credit purposes at the secondary school level.

For more information, contact the International and Heritage Languages Association in Edmonton at (780) 428-5510 or the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association in Calgary at (403) 233-7998.

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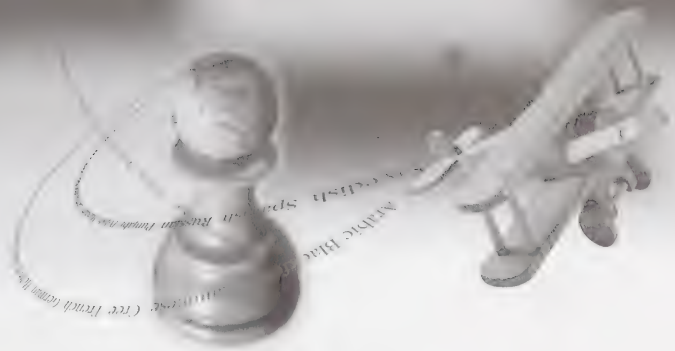

Language Programs Available in Alberta

Did you know there are some 20 different languages taught in Alberta schools? Many of these languages are taught as locally developed courses that meet the needs of people in the local community. Others are provincial optional courses that provide opportunities for language learning at the elementary, junior high and senior high levels.

Check with your school or school authority to find out which languages are available to you.

Here is a brief summary of the languages currently available in Alberta schools:

Provincially Developed Optional Courses*

Language	K–6	7–9	10–12
Blackfoot	X	X	X
Cree	X	X	X
French	X	X	X
French Language Arts	X	X	X
German		X	X
Italian			X
Japanese			X
Latin			X
Spanish		X	X
Spanish Language Arts	X		
Ukrainian		X	X
Ukrainian Language Arts	X	X	X

* Provincially developed courses and programs are designed and authorized by Alberta Learning.

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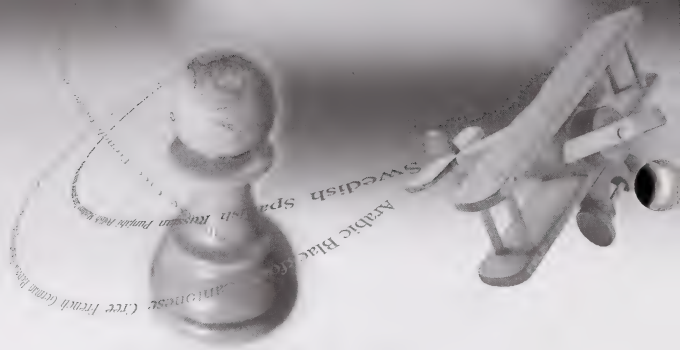

Language Programs Available in Alberta (continued)

Locally Developed Optional Courses

Language	K–6	7–9	10–12
American Sign Language	X	X	X
Arabic			X
Arabic Language Arts	X	X	X
Blackfoot Studies			X
Chinese (Cantonese)			X
Chinese (Mandarin) Language Arts	X	X	X
German Language Arts	X	X	X
Greek			X
Hebrew	X	X	X
Hungarian			X
Introduction to Modern Languages			X
Japanese			X
Polish	X	X	X
Portuguese			X
Russian	X	X	X
Stoney			X
Swedish			X

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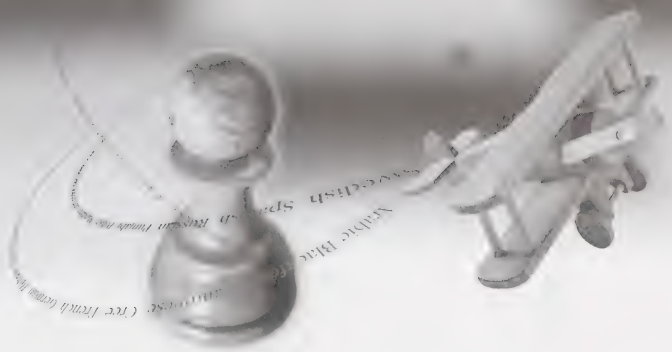

Employment and Career Opportunities

Knowing another language can open up a world of job possibilities! Here are just some of the employment opportunities that await you:

- There is a growing demand in business for employees who speak more than one language, in areas such as the import/export sector, marketing, computer software development and technical support, public relations, investment, management and transportation.
- The education field in Alberta, across Canada and abroad increasingly requires teachers and researchers with skills in other languages.
- The service sector offers opportunities in travel and tourism, sales, customer service and clerical positions.
- Communication and media opportunities include international advertising, radio and television, writing (including technical, commercial and sports writing), translation, publishing and filmmaking.
- Libraries, museums, foundations and governments require researchers with skills in other languages.
- Many organizations require translators, interpreters and researchers.
- More and more employers recognize that people develop many skills when they learn another language, including problem-solving skills, self-discipline and the ability to understand and recognize cultural differences.
- Employers are looking for staff members who are self-confident, adaptable and able to travel in and/or move to other countries.

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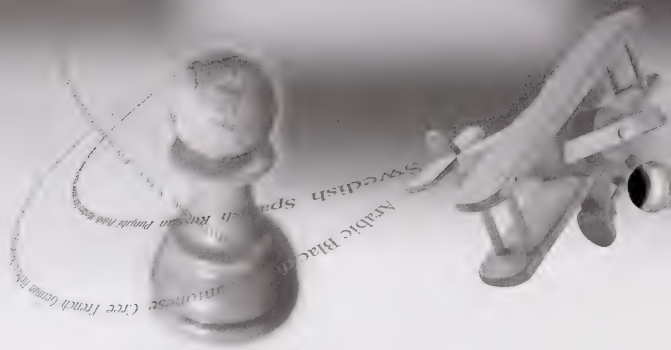

Employment and Career Opportunities (continued)

Jobs and potential careers for which second language skills would be an asset:

Accountant
Actor
Advertising executive
Agricultural specialist
Airline reservation agent
Announcer (radio/television)
Anthropologist
Area studies specialist
Bank officer
Broadcast technician
Budget analyst
Call centre agent
Clergy
Collection agent
College/university professor
Consular officer
Counsellor
Credit agent
Credit analyst
Engineer
Exporter/importer
Export manager
Film producer
Financial analyst/officer
Flight attendant
Foreign correspondent
Foreign services officer
Geographer
Graphic designer
Guide/tour operator
Health/hospital worker
Historian
Home economist
Hospital administrator
Hotel information clerk
Hotel manager
Hotel/motel desk clerk
Housekeeping supervisor
Immigration officer
Insurance agent
Interpreter
Journalist
Law enforcement officer
Lawyer
Librarian
Loan officer
Management analyst
Manager
Marketing specialist
Missionary
Nurse
Parks service officer
Personnel officer/manager
Physician
Pilot/flight engineer
Political scientist
Public health specialist
Public information officer
Realtor
Receptionist
Restaurant captain/manager
Sales representative
Secretary
Social worker
Stenographer
Switchboard operator
Teacher
Technical writer
Telephone operator
Translator
Travel agent
Web site designer

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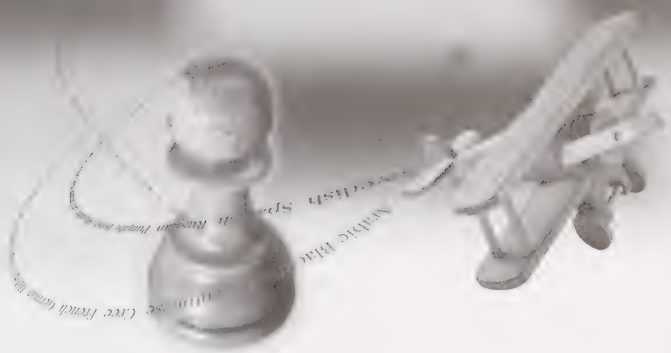

Types of Language Programs

There's more than one way to learn another language! In fact, in Alberta, there are at least three different types of language programs:

Second Language Course Series
In a second language course series, a language is studied as a subject to develop communication skills and cultural awareness. Second language courses may be taught for 30 or 40 minutes a day. There are different entry points, from Kindergarten to Grade 10, depending on the school and course availability.

Bilingual Programs
In a bilingual program, a language other than English or French is the language of instruction for up to half of the school day. In Alberta, bilingual programs are offered in Arabic, German, Hebrew, Mandarin, Polish and Ukrainian. In addition, some band-operated schools offer bilingual programs in Blackfoot and Cree. In elementary schools, language arts in the target language, social studies, physical education, art, music and health are generally taught in the target language. In junior high schools, about 25% to 33% of the curriculum is taught in the target language. At the senior high school level, language arts courses are offered to help students maintain language skills in Arabic, German, Mandarin and Ukrainian.

Alternative French Language Programs (includes French Immersion)
Alternative French language programs use French as the language of instruction for most of each school day (usually from 75% to 100% in the early grades and from 25% to 70% in junior high and senior high school). Several or all subjects are taught in French, except for English language arts. Early immersion begins in Kindergarten or Grade 1; late immersion (or extended French) begins in Grade 7.

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